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THE BENEFITS OF WALKING MEDITATION

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Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

Today, rather than conducting one of the meditations in my usual repertoire, I decided to do a walking meditation. **The Expand app** now offers Multi-Day Journeys, and the Walking Meditation experience stood out to me as an exceptional opportunity because my neighborhood is spacious and conducive to afternoon walks. The gorgeous rays of sun painting the greenery of the manicured lawns seemed like the perfect environment to meditate in. I was ready to get my body moving while finding that quiet peace inside that has become so important to me over the last year.

We tend to think of meditation as a tool to achieve stillness, and I associate meditation with finding the peace within. However, it turns out that peace does not have to mean stillness. Walking meditation is a whole different ballgame, a way to access the peace of meditation while keeping our bodies in motion. It's a way to experience another variant of mindfulness as we notice the sights and sounds of the world around us and experience them in the movement of the meditation.

What immediately stood out to me within seconds of starting the meditation was the fluidity of the world. Fluidity and movement perpetually surround us. It's something that we tend to overlook or ignore, but when we open our minds to life's motion, we can notice how connected to it we are. The gently blowing wind affects us ever so slightly as it caresses our skin. Wafting scents evoke emotions and memories that come from the triggers of experience. As this particular meditative journey says, what we pay attention to in our flow of experiences, we cultivate more of.

As I connected with the fluidity of the world around me, I began to notice the balance that we typically overlook in daily life. Everything either has or seeks balance, right? The world is a balance of everything, teeter-tottering back and forth as we learn and grow. But something as simple as walking becomes so instinctual to us that we never notice the minute mechanical details that make up the act of actually walking. While connecting mindfully to walking, I felt my body find balance in every step, reminding me that we tend to exist somewhat off balance. Our bodies learn to find balance and correct

any issues as we walk, and apparent flawlessness becomes second nature. But walking is an act of finding balance in each step. If you lose it, you fall. My body finds that balance so effortlessly it becomes an instinct, no longer a task. It's second nature.

Then, in the true form of a great mindfulness exercise, I began to realize how much of our existence is done instinctively without thought. The daily functions of our bodies, from breathing to walking to swallowing, are so instinctually programmed in us that they take no thought or effort at all. When we're able to break that down and truly focus on each step, on our feet touching the ground, swaying out from the knees, pushed out by the hips, connecting up to our shoulders, combining with our breath, swaying with our arms... only then can we experience the refreshing deep-rooted active meditation that comes with full focus.

If you've never tried a mindful exercise, especially one dedicated to something as deeply ingrained in us as walking, I believe you'd enjoy it. Having the veil lifted on our body's daily mechanics that we take for granted is an enlightening and validating form of meditation. I encourage you to explore this in the Expand app's Walking Meditation daily journey. It's been such a valuable experience to me, and my hunch is that it will open your eyes in a similar way.